CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 16 OCTOBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY ISSUED ON 15 OCTOBER 1998, CONCERNING THE EXTENSION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE MORATORIUM ON ALL ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINE EXPORTS AND TRANSFERS

I have the honour to communicate to you the text of a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey issued on 15 October 1998, concerning the extension for another three years of the comprehensive moratorium on all anti-personnel landmine exports and transfers introduced by Turkey in 1996.

I would be grateful if you would issue this text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distribute it to all member States and non-member participants in the work of the CD.

(Signed) Murat Sungar
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

GE.98-64213

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY

An integral part of efforts aimed at preventing proliferation of anti-personnel landmines (APLs) are the resolutions since 1993 of the United Nations General Assembly calling on member States to implement a moratorium on the export of landmines. In light of these resolutions, Turkey, who has in fact been implementing a de facto moratorium by not exporting any APLs in recent years, declared on 17 January 1996 on a unilateral basis a comprehensive moratorium on all anti-personnel landmine exports and transfers for a renewable term of three years. In view of the ratification of the Ottawa Convention by forty states and its entry into force as of March 1, 1999, Turkey, as a renewed expression of her determination to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the international community aimed at preventing the casualties caused by APLs and her commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the relevant international instruments in this field, decided to extend this moratorium for another three years commencing from its expiry.

Since the initial stages Turkey has been giving support and making contributions to the efforts undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament with a view to achieving a global transfer ban on APLs. Furthermore, Turkey has also initiated contacts with some of her neighbours to establish bilateral regimes for keeping the common borders free from APLs and preventing their use in border areas in the future.

On the other hand, in spite of the sensitivity of the international community and the positive steps taken on this issue, it is regrettable to see the ongoing use of APLs in an indiscriminative manner by various terrorist organizations targeting everyone, including women and children. We believe that our decision to extend the existing moratorium will contribute significantly to the efforts towards a global ban on APLs.

Ankara, 15 October 1998